

Hosue bill to cut school funding

Dear Editor:

On Monday morning, I sat in on a conference call with Dale Dennis, who is the Deputy Commissioner of Education for the Kansas State Department of Education. The call was intended for superintendents across the state and its purpose was to explain House Bill 2739 which is currently being recommended by House Leadership. This bill will likely be voted on by the House late this week or sometime next week.

I will try to explain this in terms so that someone without a school finance background can understand; I have a decent background concerning school finance, but I find the details of this bill very confusing.

In short, if HB 2739 should pass, it would cut our schools an estimated \$69,287 AND increase the local mill levy by an estimated 9.52 mills.

—Letters to the Editor—

That is not a misprint. Our budget would go down and our local mill levy would go up—significantly. In addition, the legislature would raise the base state aid per pupil to \$4,450 (from the current \$4,012) but decrease weighting formulas which schools get for various reasons such as low enrollment, at-risk students, and vocational education to make up the difference in the increased base state aid per pupil.

In simple terms, the legislature will make it look like they are increasing funding but in reality, they will be decreasing funding and forcing us to raise our local mill levy at the same time.

The only answer we can get about why the legislature is so opposed to an increase in sales tax statewide is

that the economy is too fragile for a tax increase at this time. However, for schools to maintain what we currently have, the legislature is allowing us to locally raise property taxes which, in turn, gives communities local control as to what their schools will or will not have. Maybe some will buy that excuse, but I don't.

In my opinion, any member of the legislature that votes for this bill should be removed from office by their constituents at the next election. Those that vote for this bill are devastating our schools and our communities.

Rob Schiltz
USD 297
St. Francis Schools
Superintendent

Long-term care service threatened

Letter to the Editor:

St. Francis Good Samaritan Village plays an important role in the life of our community. Not only is Village the only long-term care facility in Cheyenne County, but it is also a major contributor to our county's economy.

The Village employs over 60 staff with an annual payroll of \$1.5 million paid out in 2009. I would like to emphasize that state Medicaid funding is not the icing on the cake. It is the primary source of revenue which enables the Village to continue its operations.

Because of the growing deficit in the Kansas state budget, Governor Parkinson issued a directive in late 2009 to freeze Medicaid capitation rates and to reduce actual Medicaid payments to long-term care providers by 10 percent, effective Jan. 1.

To compensate for the reduction in Medicaid revenues, the Village has reduced budgeted non-nursing work hours, has reduced variable expenses, and has increased charges on non-Medicaid revenue sources (mainly private pay) to compensate for the Medicaid shortfall. The Medicaid reduction has also affected the subsidy to the Village kitchen to Meals on Wheels for seniors in our community.

The agencies that Village is most linked to, aside from the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society, are: 1) the Kansas Department on Aging which channels Medicaid funds and conducts inspections, and 2) the Kansas Association for Homes and Services for the Aging, an advocate agency for non-profit long-term care providers.

cal Lutheran Good Samaritan Society, are: 1) the Kansas Department on Aging which channels Medicaid funds and conducts inspections, and 2) the Kansas Association for Homes and Services for the Aging, an advocate agency for non-profit long-term care providers.

The Department on Aging provides oversight for 21,379 nursing home beds in 316 facilities in Kansas. Half of these facilities are not-for-profit, including the St. Francis Village and the 16 other Good Samaritan Villages in Kansas. The department is projecting an overall reduction of \$24 million in 2010 from the original Nursing Facility budget line.

Meanwhile, Kansas Association for Homes and Services is actively lobbying for long-term care interests before the final budget vote in Topeka. The legislature is considering or has passed a number of revenue collection measures. These include additional taxation on alcohol, cigarettes, and the sugar in soda pop.

As for levying a 1-percent increase in state sales tax, House Bill 2473 calling for a 1-percent state sales tax increase was curiously removed from the House docket. A Wichita television station polled voter sentiment on this issue, and 55 percent were in favor and 40 percent were opposed to a 1-percent sales

tax increase. Shouldn't conservative fiscal policy be in favor of balancing revenues with expenses, not simply against taxation at any cost?

To add to the injury, the state legislature is working on the idea of a "Nursing Home Provider Tax" which is a daily tax on each nursing home bed. Kansas Association for Homes and Services is opposed to this concept, advocating that the legislature has a responsibility to come up with a broad-based system to deal with the state's fiscal crisis, and not pick out nursing homes to come up with the money to get matching federal money. The proposed tax is \$4 per bed per day. At the St. Francis Village, that would amount to \$73,000 per year. A repressive bed tax is regressive public policy!

What the general public doesn't realize, is that for every \$100 the state has cut out of Medicaid, we have lost \$233 in 30/70 federal matching Medicaid contribution. Anybody with a connection to long-term care should take the time to connect to Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer and Rep. John Faber to urge the restoration of Medicaid entitlements for our seniors.

Jeffrey Paulsen, administrator
St. Francis Good Samaritan Village

Reader writes a response letter

To the Editor:

I am writing this letter in response to Don Love's letter (3-11-10). First of all Glenn Beck is a skilled political entertainer who uses inflammatory rhetoric to hook the emotions of millions. Beck is a regular purveyor of ridiculous Obama-center conspiracy theories. Beck has even ridiculed rural Americans because money was included in the Federal stimulus fund for high-speed internet, since they are underserved by telecommunications companies.

"Beck smeared rural Americans by painting them...with his spiral brand of malicious humor...as inconsequential rubes sucking at the government teat."

I guess Beck doesn't like you spending HIS money to enjoy the same thing he already has.

This is the first time since the yellow journalism of a century ago that the United States has a major news organization (FOX) devoted to the promotion of one political party. All views should be discussed not just one slanted view so people can make informed decisions and not be led in what to believe.

It is the goal of the Republicans,

big multi-corporations and the free market proponents to have just two classes of people in our country. The very rich who will be educated and the very poor who will be illiterate. No middle class at all. This is why getting a college degree is becoming so expensive and almost out of reach for low and middle income families. Our country is already falling behind other industrialized countries with the number of adults with higher educations. A well-educated population is what made this country great for the past decades.

The Texas Education Board is in the middle of rewriting textbooks to fit the ideas of what the very far right

believes in. Since Texas is the largest buyers of textbooks this could have profound consequences for the rest of the country. So our children and grandchildren are going to be indoctrinated with what the right wing believes in. So much for Socialism and Communism indoctrination of our children and grandchildren.

I like how Mr. Love injected God and prayer in his letter but he must have forgotten what God says about bearing false witness against your neighbor. President Obama is neither Communist nor a Nazi - he is a Centrist.

Diana Brunswig-Bosso
Arnold, Mo



Casey's Comments

By
Casey
McCormick



Nothing lasts forever on this planet. We live in a constant state of flux, whether you like it or not.

That's why I enjoy being able to give a little tribute and recognition to people, places or things that have left us. Today's subject is television actor Fess Parker.

Looking back from today, he was one of those larger-than-life individuals who exemplified the American dream.

A big man, 6-foot, 6-inches tall, Mr. Parker wanted to be a naval combat pilot in W.W.II. Since he couldn't fit in the cramped cockpit of a plane, he transferred to the Marine Corps. Although he was shipped to the South Pacific,

the atomic bomb saved him from combat.

With the G.I. Bill he was able to attend college and landed in the southwest, earning his masters of Theater History at the University of Southern California.

This placed him where his size and rugged good looks made him a natural for film and television.

As a kid, boys like me loved watching him play Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone.

Two things came from my personal experience.

First, we learned a couple of songs that every youngster knew by heart! "Born on a mountain top in Tennessee.... Davy, Davy Crockett, king of the wild frontier." And "Daniel Boone was

Relay For Life needs volunteers

Letter to the Editor:

Have you or someone near and dear to you had cancer? Have you attended a Relay for Life event?

Impeachment grounds!!

Letter to the Editor:

As a result of Mr. Obama's "homosexual proclamation" last year, Mr. Obama is "on record" as promoting "sexual perversion" in America. That is a clear cut impeachable offense in my opinion.

Furthermore, as a result of Mr. Obama's Marxist/socialist ideology, he is "subverting" the very foundations upon which this nation was founded. The said "subversion" constitutes grounds for impeachment also, in my opinion.

Reference Article II, Sec. 4 U.S. Constitution.

Terry Rueb
St. Francis

—Letters to the Editor—

It is so great to see how much the Survivor Walk and the luminary lighting mean to cancer survivors and their friends and family. It is also a wonderful way to remember those who lost their fight with this dreadful disease. Most people who have been touched by cancer and who have participated in Relay want to go again the next year.

Now for the bad news. Unless people step up and become involved, Relay for Life will not happen again in Cheyenne County. Most of those who have been involved for the last decade have had life changes and have decided that they can no longer be in charge.

Please help to keep this tradition alive! The date is flexible, the hours of the Relay are flexible (It does not have to last all night) and the schedule for the evening can

be changed.

Relay proceeds go to the American Cancer Society, which offers assistance and information to citizens of Cheyenne County. They fund a great deal of cancer research that helps all of us. American Cancer Society depends on people like you for their financial support, and events like Relay are a big part of it.

Contact: Kim Peach
American Cancer Society
Community Manager, Income Development

210 W. 12th LaCrosse, KS 67548

Phone/fax: 785-222-3327
Cell phone: 785-639-3603
kim.peach@ cancer.org

A world with less cancer, is a world with more Birthdays.

THE CLOCK IS TICKING!

Sherry Schultz
St. Francis

The Saint Francis Herald

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GOD SAYS
Uphold me according unto
thy word, that I may live: and
let me not be ashamed of my
hope. Psalms 119:116

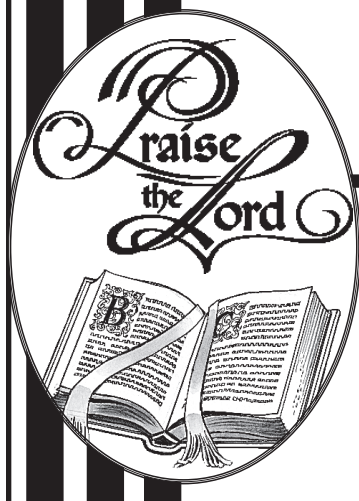
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